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A NEW SPECIES OF *THOMASOMYS* FROM VENEZUELA

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A single specimen of *Thomasomys*, collected on a recent short expedition to northern Venezuela, proves to represent an undescribed species of this interesting genus.

I take pleasure in naming this new species in honor of Mr. Gilbert Ottley, who has supported the work of the American Museum and been a volunteer assistant on several expeditions to South America and the West Indies.

Thomasomys ottleyi, new species

Type.—No. 96,169, Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.; ♂ ad.; Paramo de los Conejos, about fifteen miles north of Merida, Venezuela; altitude 9600 feet; February 7, 1932; collector, H. E. Anthony. The type is a skin and skull in good condition.

General Characters.—Quite similar in superficial appearance to *Thomasomys rhoadsi*, being one of the dark-colored, short-tailed[1] members of the genus, but differing from it in skull characters. Distinguished from *T. laniger emeritus* and *T. vestitus*, both of which occur in the Merida section, by size and color differences in the skins and by marked cranial characters. Zygomatic plate with oblique, straight anterior margin; postpalatal pits present, though very small, and suggestive of *Oryzomys*.

Description.—Color above, almost uniform fuscous black (Ridgway), speckled with snuff-brown, darkest on the rump. Individual hairs of back sooty black for almost their entire length with tips either snuff-brown, sooty black, or banded brown and black, with a sprinkling of long, all black hairs. Head and sides of body with less sooty black; hands and feet above, clove-brown; tail, above and below, clove-brown. Underparts olive-brown with sooty bases of hairs showing through.

Skull long and slender with rounded, tubular rostrum and interorbital region; lacrymal region without noticeable pit or excavation characteristic of most other species of the genus; zygomatic arches showing very little expansion, scarcely extending laterally beyond plane of brain-case; anterior margin of zygomatic plate straight and oblique; palatal foramina rather short; postpalatal notch reaching to plane of last molars; bullæ moderately inflated.

Measurements.—Taken in the flesh: total length, 232 millimeters; length of head and body, 111; tail vertebræ, 121; hind foot (c.u.), 30. Skull, greatest length, 30; condylo-incisive length, 27.1; length of nasals, 11.6; interorbital breadth, 5.9; zygomatic breadth, 14.2; breadth of brain-case, 13.5; incisive foramina, 5.4×2.4; length of upper molar series, 4.5.

[1]Not short-tailed in actual length but in comparison to the distinctly longer-tailed members of the genus.

Only one specimen of *Thomasomys ottleyi* was taken, in a damp, mossy spot in humid, temperate forest, and it was a surprise to discover a new *Thomasomys* in a region where two distinct forms are known to occur. The members of the sooty-colored section of the genus are often in the same localities frequented by the brown forms, but so far as I am aware, none of these short-tailed, dark representatives have been taken as far to the eastward before. Throughout the main ranges of the Andes of northern Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia the short-tailed dark *Thomasomys* are a well-established group and it is, perhaps, to be expected that it would occur in the Merida Andes.

To represent *Thomasomys laniger emeritus* of Thomas, described from Montes de Escaguer, Venezuela, I have a series of seven specimens collected in the Merida district by Osgood and Conover and kindly loaned to me by Dr. W. H. Osgood of the Field Museum. *Emeritus* is a small, distinctly brown, long-tailed form and not to be confused with the robust, blackish *ottleyi*.

I have no representative of *T. vestitus* which Thomas described from a specimen taken on the Rio Milla of Venezuela, which species would appear to belong with the dark-colored members of the genus. *Vestitus* is larger (hind foot 33.3 against 30 for *ottleyi*) than *ottleyi*, apparently browner in color, to judge from the type description, the anterior edge of the zygomatic root is vertical instead of oblique, and the skull measures consistently larger throughout (upper molar series 6.2 compared with 4.5, diastema 10.2 against 7.2) except for the interorbital breadth which is 4.9 as against 5.9 for *ottleyi*.

The presence of tiny postpalatal foramina is rather unusual in the genus *Thomasomys* and the absence of these has been used as one of the characters to distinguish *Thomasomys* from the closely allied *Oryzomys*. A cursory examination of part of the rather large series of skulls of *Thomasomys*, which this museum now possesses, has disclosed the fact that occasional individuals have a foramen on one side or a minute vestige of paired openings, as the case may be. No effort has been made to tabulate the frequency of this occurrence or to discover whether some forms show it more often than others. I suspect, therefore, that the presence of postpalatal foramina in *Thomasomys ottleyi* is a character of questionable value and one that may not hold up if a larger series is obtained.